

## **Frequently-asked Questions**

### **Certification Standards for Third-party Inspectors**

**July 2010**

**Q: What's a third-party inspector?**

A: A third-party inspector (TPI) is a person certified by the State Planning Office who can inspect buildings and issue a building inspection report indicating whether construction meets Maine's Uniform Building and Energy Code. TPIs may be hired by municipalities to perform inspections in lieu of the municipal building inspector. Alternately, TPIs may be hired directly by the building owner.

**Q: I am interested in becoming a third-party inspector, what do I have to do to become certified?**

A: You must take the basic training provided by the State Planning Office and pass an examination in each code of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) in which you are hired to perform inspections.

The following number of training contact hours is required for certification:

1. residential building code	6 contact hours
2. commercial building code	12 contact hours
3. residential energy code	6 contact hours
4. commercial energy code	6 contact hours
5. residential radon code	3 contact hours
6. indoor residential ventilation code	2 contact hours
7. indoor commercial ventilation code	3 contact hours

The State Planning Office will provide the necessary training for TPIs to meet these contact hours for certification.

**Q: Do I have to become certified in all seven codes that comprise MUBEC?**

A: No, you need only be certified in the codes for which you are hired to perform inspections. For example, if you only perform inspections for energy conservation in commercial buildings, you need only take the training and examination for the commercial energy code.

**Q: When may I begin performing inspections?**

A: You may begin inspections as soon as you are certified by the State Planning Office.

**Q: What if I am already certified by a national codes organization?**

A: The State Planning Office may determine that a national certification substitute for Maine certification if the national certification meets Maine's knowledge objectives. You may complete and submit an application form requesting such a determination from the Office (See [Application to Waive the Building Standards Certification Requirements](#)).

**Q: When and where will the exams be offered? What is the format of the exams?**

A: The State Planning Office will begin scheduling exams in September 2010. They will be offered in multiple locations across the state.

Exams contain 50 multiple choice and T/F questions and one case study question. Exam takers have 3 hours to complete each exam and may use the code and other reference materials while taking the exam.

**Q: When and where will the training be held? What is the format of the training?**

A: The State Planning Office intends to begin scheduling a full program of training courses in each of the MUBEC codes beginning in September 2010. Each training session will be offered in four (4) locations across the state. Training for indoor residential ventilation and indoor commercial ventilation codes will be scheduled together on the same day. The training will be a well-designed professional training program suited for adult learners. Each training session will include a variety of presentation and interaction training methods that keep the session lively and proactive. The commercial energy code training will be an online training course.

**Q: Will there be a cost for the training and exams?**

Yes, TPIs will be charged a fee to cover the Office's costs of providing the training and staff time to administer the exams. Once fees are set, the Office will post them to its web site.

**Q: Where do I get a copy of the code?**

The TPI will need to acquire his or her own copy of the code. The codes that comprise the MUBEC may be purchased from their respective publishers: The 2009 International Residential Code (IRC), 2009 International Building Code (IBC), 2009 International Existing Building Code (IEBC), and 2009 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC) from the International Code Council ([www.iccsafe.org](http://www.iccsafe.org) or 1-888-422-7233); ASHRAE Standards 62.1-2007, 62.2-2007, and 90.1-2007 from the American Society of Heating, Refrigeration and Air-Conditional Engineers, Inc. ([www.ashrae.org](http://www.ashrae.org) or 1-800-527-4723); and ASTM E 1465-06 from ASTM International ([www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org) or (610) 832-9585).

**Q: Will the State Planning Office post me in their on-line registry?**

Yes, the State Planning Office will maintain a list of certified TPIs and will post this list to its website for use by municipalities and property owners.

**Q: How long is my certification valid?**

Upon successful completion of the required training and the examination, a TPI's certification will be valid for six years.

**Q: What do I have to do to maintain my certification?**

Over the course of the six-years, the TPI must demonstrate ongoing training activity to keep knowledgeable in the codes. The following number of contact hours is required for recertification:

1. residential building code	9 contact hours
2. commercial building code	15 contact hours
3. residential energy code	9 contact hours
4. commercial energy code	9 contact hours
5. residential radon code	3 contact hours
6. indoor residential ventilation code	2 contact hours
7. indoor commercial ventilation code	3 contact hours

**Q: Will the State Planning Office provide training needed for recertification?**

No, the Office will only provide the basic training needed for initial certification. A TPI may re-take the basic training once during the six-year cycle and count that towards recertification.

The TPI is responsible for taking additional training to achieve the balance of the contact hours needed. A number of outside codes organizations and state agencies offer training in topics related to the MUBEC codes. The Office maintains an on-line listing of acceptable training offered these organizations. The Office will review the training objectives of other outside training and determine whether it is applicable for recertification (See [Application for Outside Training](#)).

In addition, a TPI may count certain formal education, professional licensing and professional activities towards recertification (See [Application for Additional Contact Hours toward Recertification](#)).

**Q: Does the State Planning Office track my training hours?**

A: The Office maintains a database of training contact hours approved towards recertification and can provide that information upon request. The TPI is ultimately responsible for obtaining and keeping track of required documentation.

**Q: What if a building owner complains? Can SPO remove my certification?**

A: The State Planning Office cannot revoke a TPI certification. Only the District Court may revoke certification in accordance with 30-A MRSA section 4421, subsection 6.

**Q: Where can I find more information about TPIs?**

A. For more information about training and certification:

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/ceo/index.htm>

For more information about the new building code: <http://www.maine.gov/dps/bbcs/>

The Department of Public Safety's Bureau of Building Codes and Standards is in the process of adopting a rule (<http://www.maine.gov/dps/bbcs/Proposed%20Rulemaking.html>, see Chapter 2) to provide guidance to TPIs on performing inspections.